

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (currently amended) A method of operating a communications network supporting a packet-based internetworking protocol including:

distributing a tariff for the use of the communications network supporting a packet-based internetworking protocol via the ~~said~~ communications network to a multiplicity of customer terminals connected to the communications network, the tariff comprising a formula for calculating a charge as a function of a loading of the communications network, for use by at least one of the customer terminals of the communications network; and

calculating using the ~~said~~ tariff a charge for use by the at least one customer terminal of the communications network.

2. (currently amended) A method according to claim 1, in which the step of distributing the tariff includes steps of communicating separately a the formula for calculating the charge ~~calculation of network usage charges~~, and coefficients for use in the ~~said~~ formula.

3. (previously amended) A method according to claim 1, in which the tariff is distributed to customer terminals by multicasting.

4. (currently amended) A method according to claim 1, further including a further step of distributing to the customer terminals a revised tariff.

5. (original) A method according to claim 4 , in which the step of distributing a revised tariff comprises communicating revised coefficients for use in the formula previously distributed to the customer terminals.

6. (currently amended) A method according to claim 4, further including detecting loading of network resources and determining a revised tariff in dependence upon the results of the ~~said step of detecting~~ detected loading.

7. (original) A method according to claim 6, in which the steps of detecting loading and determining a revised tariff are carried out automatically by a network management platform.

8. (currently amended) A method according to claim 1 further including communicating to a customer terminal data identifying a first predetermined communications channel, and at the customer terminal subsequently monitoring the ~~said~~ communications channel for communications relating to the ~~said~~ tariff.

9. (currently amended) A method according to claim 8, further including communicating on the ~~said~~-first communications channel data identifying one or more further communications channels, and wherein the customer terminal subsequently monitors in addition the or each further channel.

10. (currently amended) A method according to claim 9, further including introducing a new communications channel and identifying the ~~said~~-new communications channel on a communications channel previously identified to the customer terminal depending on loading of the ~~said~~-previously identified communications channel.

11. (currently amended) A method according to claim 1 further including communicating encrypted tariff data to the customer terminal, and decrypting the ~~said~~-tariff data within a secure module located at the customer terminal.

12. (currently amended) A method according to claim 11 further including communicating different tariff data on a plurality of different communication channels and providing at a customer terminal a key specific to tariff data on one of the plurality of communication channels.

13. (currently amended) A method according to claim 1 further including operating a plurality of different services on the communications network, communicating different tariffs for different respective services to the multiplicity of customer terminals, and selectively varying a respective tariff depending on an operational condition of the respective service.

14. (canceled)

15. (currently amended) A method according to claim 1, further including communicating different tariffs having different respective ~~volatilities~~ volatilities to different respective ones of the multiplicity of customer terminals.

16. (currently amended) A method of operating a communications network, including:

calculating for each of a multiplicity of customers, using a selected one of a plurality of different tariffs distributed to a respective customer terminal attached to the network, charges for the use of network resources by ~~a~~ the respective customer terminal attached to the network,

measuring the loading of network resources, and

varying one or more of the plurality of different tariffs in dependence upon the loading of the network resources, and in which different ones of the plurality of different tariffs have different respective volatilities.

17. (canceled)

18. (original) A method of operating a communications network comprising:

- a) communicating tariff data to a user terminal connected to the network;
- b) calculating at the user terminal using the tariff data a charge for traffic communicated between the network and the terminal and making a payment;
- c) sampling part only of the traffic communicated between users and the network and for the sampled traffic comparing any payments made by users and the payment due according to the tariff.

19. (currently amended) A method of operating a communications network comprising:

- a) establishing contracts between network users and a network operator and storing user contract data;
- b) sampling part only of the traffic to or from a user on the network;
- c) comparing sampled traffic with traffic contracted for by the user; and

d) amending the user status when a discrepancy between the sampled parameters and the contracted parameters is detected.

20. (original) A method according to claim 19, in which the step of establishing contracts between network users and the network operator includes making an advance payment for network usage.

21. (previously amended) A method according to claim 19, in which the step of amending the user status includes fining the user.

22. (original) A method according to claim 19, in which in step (a) the user transfers a deposit to the network operator, which deposit is debited in step (d) when the discrepancy between the sampled parameters and the contracted parameters is detected.

23. (currently amended) A method of operating a communications network including:

distributing a tariff via the communications network to a multiplicity of customer terminals connected to the communications network, and

calculating using the said tariff a charge for use by the customer terminal of the communications network,

and in which the step of distributing the tariff includes steps of communicating separately a formula for calculation of network usage charges, and coefficients for use in the ~~said~~ formula.

24. (previously amended) A communications network arranged to operate by a method according to claim 1.

25. (previously amended) A customer terminal adapted for use in a method according to claim 1.

26. (currently amended) A customer terminal for use in a communications network, the customer terminal including:

a network interface which in use receives tariff information via a communications network;

a store programmed with tariff information received at the ~~said~~ interface;

a meter for measuring use by the customer terminal of the network to which the tariff applies and for measuring the state of the network; and

a processor connected to the ~~said~~ meter and to the store and arranged to calculate using the ~~said~~ tariff information and information relating to the measured use by the customer terminal of the network and information relating to the measured state of the network, a network usage charge.

27.-28. (canceled)

29. (original) A method of operating a communications network comprising

- a) at a customer terminal measuring network usage;
- b) communicating network usage data from the customer terminal to the network operator; and
- c) the network operator sampling part only of the traffic communicated between a customer terminal and the network and for the sampled traffic comparing the network usage with the network usage data from the customer terminal and thereby detecting any discrepancy.

30. (previously amended) A method according to claim 1 including communicating encrypted tariff data to the customer terminal, and decrypting the said tariff data at the customer terminal.

31. (currently amended) A method of operating a communications network including:

- distributing a tariff via the communications network to a multiplicity of customer terminals connected to the communications network,
- measuring at a customer terminal use by the customer terminal of network resources; and

calculating, using ~~the~~ results of measuring use by the customer terminal of network resources ~~the said step of measuring together with the said~~ tariff, a charge for use by the customer terminal of the network to which the tariff applies.

32. (currently amended) A method of operating a communications network, including automatically varying, depending on network loading as detected at a customer terminal, a tariff for network usage by a customer terminal, the tariff being distributed to the terminal and comprising a formula for calculating a charge as a function of the loading of the communications network for use by the customer terminal.

33. (currently amended) A method according to claim 1, further including communicating different tariffs from a plurality of different service providers to a respective customer terminal, at the customer terminal selecting between the service providers, and receiving network services via the selected service provider.

34. (previously amended) A method according to claim 19, in which the step of establishing contracts includes associating a traffic conditioning agreement (TCA) with a respective customer.

35. (previously amended) A network arranged to operate by a method according to claim 29.

36. (new) A method of operating a communications network supporting a packet-based internetworking protocol, the method comprising:

distributing a tariff for the use of the communications network supporting a packet-based internetworking protocol via the communications network to a multiplicity of customer terminals connected to the communications network, the tariff comprising a formula for calculating a charge as a function of the state of the communications network, for use by at least one of the customer terminals of the communications network; and

calculating using the tariff a charge for use by the at least one customer terminal of the communications network.

37. (new) A method of operating a communications network comprising applying only a single test to traffic entering the network, the test being applied at a point of access to the network, and the single test comprising:

examining one or more packets of data forming the traffic entering the network at the access point;

determining if the or each examined packet may be illegitimate and designating any thus determined packet or packets as a suspicious packet or packets;

allowing the or each suspicious packet to enter the network; and

checking after its admission onto the network to determine if the or each suspicious packet is a permitted packet according to any agreement between the associated customer and an operator of the network, and if not, administering a retrospective punishment to the associated customer.